

Claims 1-15 are presently pending in this application, Claims 9 and 10 having been withdrawn from further consideration by the Examiner, Claims 1 and 4-8 having been amended and Claims 11-15 having been newly added by the present amendment.

In the outstanding Office Action, the drawings were objected to because of informality; Claims 1-8 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §112, second paragraph, for being indefinite; Claims 1-6 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Japanese Patent No. 404154573A (hereinafter "JP '573"); and Claims 6-8 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over JP '573 in view of Akahori et al. (U.S. Patent 5,310,587).

In response to the objection regarding the drawing requirement, submitted herewith is a separate LETTER REQUESTING APPROVAL OF NEW DRAWINGS, submitting for approval of Figure 1. Specifically, Figure 1 showing an exemplary kitchen sheet has been submitted as requested by the Examiner.

The specification has been corrected in consistent with the drawing additions requested above.

With regard to the rejection under 35 U.S.C. §112, second paragraph, Claims 1 and 4-8 have been amended to clarify the subject matter recited therein. Thus, Claims 1-8 are believed to be in compliance with the requirements of the statute. If, however, the Examiner disagrees, the Examiner is invited to telephone the undersigned who will be happy to work in a joint effort to derive mutually satisfactory claim language.

Also, newly added Claims 11-15 find clear support in the original specification. For example, Claims 11-14 are supported by page 6, line 17, to page 7, line 16, and Claim 15 is supported by page 12, lines 1-20, of the specification. Hence, these new claims are not believed to raise a question of new matter.

Briefly recapitulating, Claim 1 of the present invention is directed to a kitchen sheet including a base sheet made of a fiber aggregate having an air permeability of 5 cc/cm²/sec or more as measured in accordance with JIS L1096A, the base sheet having a plurality of convex portions giving the kitchen sheet an apparent thickness of 1.0 mm or greater, and a compressive recovery of 30% or more. By providing the convex portions on such a base sheet, the kitchen sheet can support food upon the convex portions, thereby reducing the surface area in contact with the food and forming concaved passageways for venting water vapor generated from the food more efficiently and effectively.¹

JP '573 discloses a packaged body for food. Nevertheless, JP '573 does not teach a base sheet having a plurality of convex portions giving the kitchen sheet an apparent thickness of 1.0 mm or greater, and a compressive recovery of 30% or more, as recited in amended Claim 1. Instead, JP '573 only discloses a perforated, e.g., pierced, slit, or incised, hydrophobic sheet, and does not disclose convex portions giving the kitchen sheet an apparent thickness of 1.0 mm or greater, nor a compressive recovery of 30% or more. Furthermore, the kitchen sheet according to Claim 1 has a plurality of convex portions adjacent to each other. This means that the portions between the adjacent convex portions are in the configuration of concavities. Therefore, when put on the sheet, food comes into point contact with the top of the convex portions. Since the sheet has a specific compressive recovery, the convex portions will not collapse in resistance to the food weight, providing between the convex portions a space serving as a passageway formed by the concavities connected with each other. Vapor generated from the food is allowed to escape through this space. In addition, since the sheet also has a specific air permeability, the vapor can escape

¹ Specification, page 12, lines 1-23.

from the wall area of the convex portions. Therefore, the structure recited in Claim 1 is clearly distinguishable from JP '573.

Likewise, Akahori et al. disclose a wrapping for food, but do not teach a base sheet having a plurality of convex portions giving the kitchen sheet an apparent thickness of 1.0 mm or greater, and a compressive recovery of 30% or more, as recited in amended Claim 1. Thus, the structure recited in Claim 1 is also distinguishable from Akahori et al.

Because neither JP '573 nor Akahori et al. disclose the base sheet as recited in Claim 1, even the combined teachings of these applied references would not render the structure recited in Claim 1 obvious.

For the foregoing reasons, Claim 1 is believed to be allowable. Furthermore, since Claims 2-8 and 11-15 ultimately depend from Claim, substantially the same arguments set forth above also apply to these dependent claims. Hence, Claims 2-8 and 11-15 are believed to be allowable as well.

In view of the amendments and discussions presented above, Applicants respectfully submit that the present application is in condition for allowance, and an early action favorable to that effect is earnestly solicited.

Respectfully submitted,

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IN THE SPECIFICATION

Please insert the following text at page 3, between lines 9 and 10:

--BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

A more complete appreciation of the invention and many of the attendant advantages thereof will be readily obtained as the same becomes better understood by reference to the following detailed description when considered in connection with the accompanying drawings, wherein:

Figure 1 is an exemplary kitchen sheet according to the present invention.--

Please replace the paragraph at page 3, lines 12-16, with the following text:

--The kitchen sheet of the present invention comprises a base sheet comprising a fiber aggregate having an air permeability measured according to JIS L1096A (hereinafter simply referred to as an air permeability) of 5 cc/cm²/sec or more. Referring to Fig. 1, the [The] base sheet has been shaped to have unevenness so as to have an apparent thickness of 1.0 mm or greater, and the kitchen sheet has a compressive recovery of 30% or more.--

Please replace the paragraph at page 12, lines 1-8, with the following text:

--Since the kitchen sheet of the present invention has the base sheet shaped to have unevenness as described above, the contact area with food is diminished, and the drops of

condensation on the surface of the sheet are prevented from coming into contact with food. The shape of the unevenness is not particularly limited as long as it has concavities which connect with each other to form passageways through which water vapor generated from food can escape (concavities disposed [discontinuously and] regularly all over the kitchen sheet). That is, the unevenness presents passageways formed of connected concavities, playing an important role in letting water vapor generated from food escape.--

Please replace two paragraphs at page 13, lines 3-9, with the following text:

--Referring to Figure 1, the [The] unevenness pattern preferably has a pitch (P) (the distance between the peaks of adjacent convexities or between the valleys of adjacent concavities) of 3.5 mm or more. The pitch (P) of the unevenness pattern is selected appropriately according to the size of the food to be cooked, depending on how many convexities are to support the food. From the size of general foods, the practical upper limit of the pitch is 50 mm.

Taking various applications into consideration, the pitch (P) of the unevenness pattern is still preferably 3.5 to 25 mm, particularly preferably 5.0 to 15 mm.--

IN THE CLAIMS

Please amend Claims 1 and 4-8 and add new Claims 11-15 as follows:

--1. (Amended) A kitchen sheet comprising a base sheet [comprising] made of a fiber aggregate having an air permeability of 5 cc/cm²/sec or more as measured in accordance with JIS L1096A, said base sheet having [been shaped to have unevenness with] a plurality of convex portions giving said kitchen sheet an apparent thickness of 1.0 mm or greater, and [said kitchen sheet having] a compressive recovery of 30% or more.

4. (Amended) A kitchen sheet according to claim 1, wherein the [height] apparent thickness of said [unevenness] kitchen sheet is at least three [or] more [times the] than a thickness of said base sheet.

5. (Amended) A kitchen sheet according to claim 1, wherein said [unevenness is] plurality of convex portions have peaks separated by [arranged at a pitch of] 3.5 mm or greater, respectively.

6. (Amended) A kitchen sheet according to claim 1, wherein:
said fiber aggregate [is] comprises a laminate having at least two [or more] layers[, in which]; and [the fiber material of the surface layer constituting]
said at least two layers [laminate is] comprise a surface layer including a hydrophobic fiber material.

7. (Amended) A kitchen sheet according to claim 2, wherein:
said base sheet is a laminate having at least two [or more] layers of a fiber aggregate[, in which]; and [the fiber material of the surface layer constituting]
said [laminate is] at least two layers comprise a surface layer including a hydrophobic fiber material[,] and [the] an inner layer [constituting said laminate is] including a nonwoven fabric comprising an ultrafine hydrophobic fiber.

8. (Amended) A kitchen sheet according to claim 3, wherein:
said base sheet is a laminate having at least two [or more] layers of a fiber aggregate[, in which]; and [the fiber material of the surface layer constituting]
said [laminate is] at least two layers comprise a surface layer including a hydrophobic fiber material[,] and [the] an inner layer [constituting said laminate is] including a nonwoven fabric comprising an ultrafine hydrophobic fiber.

11. - 15. (New) --